

# Washington State's Healthy Youth Survey 2006

*Assessing students' protective factors, risk factors, and health behaviors*

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Our school is participating in the "Healthy Youth Survey". This brochure describes the survey, so that parents and students can decide if the student will take part in the survey. We encourage parents to talk about the survey with their child and whether the student wants to take part. PLEASE SHARE THIS BROCHURE WITH YOUR PARENTS/STUDENT

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## What is the survey all about?

**What kinds of questions are on the survey?** The survey asks about:

- Background information (age, gender, grade, race/ ethnicity)
- Feelings about school and community
- Relationships with friends and neighbors
- Nutrition, eating habits, and physical activity
- Health education
- Knowledge, attitudes about, and use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Safety-related habits and feelings about safety
- Violence-related behavior

Survey questions come from several well-established surveys that have taken place across the country and in Washington.

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**The Healthy Youth Survey is completely voluntary.** If a student takes part, she/he may skip any question, and may stop filling out the survey at any time. Any student who decides not to take the survey will participate in an alternative activity provided by the school, such as reading or working in the library. A student's grades will not change whether or not she/he takes part. There is no penalty for not taking part in the survey.

## How is student identity protected?

Students will not write their names anywhere on the survey or on the answer sheet. There are no codes or other information to match a survey with a particular student

Students put completed surveys into an envelope that is sealed before it leaves the classroom. No one from the school will look at the survey. Survey reports will not identify any student.

Local health departments may ask to use survey answers to examine health behaviors and to develop local programs targeting youth. Other researchers may also ask for the survey data. If survey information is given to health departments or researchers, they will be required to keep survey information anonymous.

Many agencies in Washington, including schools, work to help kids grow up in healthy environments. To do this better, we need to find out more about the strengths and weaknesses in our communities and programs for youth.

To help do this, the Healthy Youth Survey will take place in October 2006.

**Who will be asked to take the survey?** Students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes across the state. In the fall of 2004, 185,000 students in Washington participated in the survey.

## Why is the survey taking place?

The survey looks for patterns in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. We will use the information from this survey to plan programs to help support kids in the school and community, and to reduce the risks to our youth.

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**This survey is voluntary.**

**If a parent or guardian does not want their child to participate in the Healthy Youth Survey:**

Call the school and tell the principal to excuse your child from the classroom during the survey. Students not taking the survey will participate in alternative activities (reading or library work, for instance).


Students may decide not to take part in the survey. As an alternative, there will be an activity arranged by the school.

Parents or guardians can see the survey by asking the school principal. Questions about the survey can be sent by e-mail to [hys@doh.wa.gov](mailto:hys@doh.wa.gov)

Additional information about the Healthy Youth Survey 2006 may be found at [www.hys.wa.gov](http://www.hys.wa.gov)

**The number of youth participating in Washington's youth surveys has grown over time – from only a few thousand in 1988 to 185,000 in 2004**

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***The Healthy Youth Survey is sponsored by the following state agencies:***

*Department of Health (DOH), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), the DSHS Division of Alcohol & Substance Abuse (DSHS/DASA), and the Family Policy Council.*

*The survey will be carried out by RMC Research Corporation, Portland, Oregon*

**For more information about the Healthy Youth Survey, you may contact:**

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